DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 448 957 RC 022 704

AUTHOR	Leopold, Gregory D.; Childers, Robert D.; Howley-Rowe, Caitlin
TITLE	Rural School Principals' Views on the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program Application Process. Rural Education Research Report.
INSTITUTION	AEL, Inc., Charleston, WV.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2000-08-00
NOTE	39p.
CONTRACT	RJ96006001
AVAILABLE FROM	Full text at Web site: http://www.ael.org/rel/rural/abstract/leopold.htm.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrator Attitudes; *Disadvantaged Schools; *Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Parent Participation; *Principals; *Program Attitudes; Program Implementation; Resistance to Change; *Rural Schools; School Community Relationship; School Surveys; Technical Assistance
IDENTIFIERS	*Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program; Kentucky; Tennessee; Virginia; West Virginia

ABSTRACT

To generate information that would help rural schools take advantage of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program, 47 principals of rural schools in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia were interviewed via telephone. The schools fell into two categories: schools that applied but were not funded through the CSRD program and schools that were eligible for CSRD funding but did not apply. Principals from both groups indicated that rural schools needed more information about the CSRD program and technical assistance in preparing proposals; obstacles to school reform included resistance to change among staff and community members and insufficient resources, time, community support, and understanding of school reform efforts; the districts supported reform efforts but community support for reform was mixed; and assistance was needed in technology utilization, proposal development, effective curricular strategies, and parental involvement. Principals from schools that applied but were not funded noted limited resources and preparation time. Principals from schools that did not apply said they were unaware of the program. Principals from schools that applied but were not funded indicated that various reform efforts were being implemented at their schools, with most being funded by other sources. Principals from schools that did not apply most frequently noted state-mandated reforms being implemented in their schools. Implications for CSRD implementation include increasing support for disadvantaged schools, designing enough flexibility into CSRD programs to meet the needs of rural schools, and ensuring that rural schools are fully aware of the program in time to prepare for it. Appendix contains interview questions. (TD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 448 957

Rural Education

Research Report

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
M. Slack
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Rural School Principals' Views on the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program Application Process

Gregory D. Leopold
Robert D. Childers
Caitlin Howley-Rowe

AEL

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RC 022704

Rural School Principals' Views on Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program Application Process

Gregory D. Leopold
Robert D. Childers
Caitlin Howley-Rowe

AEL's mission is to link the knowledge from research with the wisdom from practice to improve teaching and learning. AEL serves as the Regional Educational Laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. For these same four states, it operates an Eisenhower Regional Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education. In addition, it serves as the Region IV Comprehensive Center and operates the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

The Rural Specialty at AEL serves as the organizational home for those aspects of AEL's work that involve providing R&D-based services to rural schools and communities. This includes the National Rural Education Specialty for the nation's system of 10 Regional Educational Laboratories. The mission of the Rural Specialty is to promote the integrity of rural, small schools in a global economy. Its guiding focus is to foster the essential relationship between rural schools and their communities.

Information about AEL projects, programs, and services is available by writing or calling AEL.

Post Office Box 1348
Charleston, West Virginia 25325-1348
304-347-0400
800-624-9120
304-347-0487 (fax)
aelinfo@ael.org
http://www.ael.org

http://www.ael.org/rel/rural/index.htm

© August 2000 by AEL, Inc.
This publication may be reproduced in its entirety
and copies distributed to others.

This publication is based on work sponsored wholly or in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract number RJ96006001. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of OERI, the Department, or any other agency of the U.S. government.

AEL is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Contents

Acknowledgments ii

Executive Summary iii

Introduction 1

Background of Study 1
Overview of Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program 1

Methodology 3

Data Collection Methods/Instruments 3
Sampling Process 3

Findings 5

Summary Findings in Rural Schools That Applied for but Did Not Receive CSRD Program Funds 5
Summary Findings in Rural Schools That Did Not Apply for CSRD Program Funds 10

Conclusions 17

Conclusions About Rural Schools That Applied for but Did Not Receive CSRD Program Funds 17
Conclusions About Rural Schools That Did Not Apply for CSRD Program Funds . . 18
Similarities among the Findings between the Two Groups 19
Differences among the Findings between the Two Groups 19

Study Implications 20

References 21

Appendixes

A. Introduction for CSRD Principal Interview
B. Completed SEDCAR Standards Checklist

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank all of the principals who gave of their busy time to respond to the interview questions. The insights and candor they provided will serve others in similar positions.

This study could not have been completed without the assistance of a few interested AEL staff members who went above and beyond their regular job responsibilities to conduct some of the interviews. Much appreciation goes to Dan Branham, consultant Rick Bowmaster, and especially Hobart Harmon.

Executive Summary

Because rural communities in the United States are diverse and are likely to have economic, political, and cultural characteristics that set them apart from urban areas, it is important to test and refine various Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program models so that they fit the needs of rural areas. As part of AEL's leadership responsibility in the rural specialty area, a study was conducted to inform comprehensive school reform planning and implementation by rural school districts and schools.

The goal of the study was to generate information that would increase the capacity of organizations responsible for supporting CSRD program implementation to serve schools in rural areas and to build the readiness of targeted rural schools to implement comprehensive school reforms. Specifically, the results are intended to assist in the development of providing readiness assistance to rural schools considering CSRD by (1) building the capacity of schools to consider implementing comprehensive reforms (through existing programs or strategies that have proven to be effective or through new strategies/models that may fit local needs); (2) adapting existing materials and processes for CSRD models to fit local needs; and (3) developing new, complementary materials and processes as needed.

The National Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program, new in 1998, provided $150 million for local schools to implement comprehensive school reform programs. Much of these CSRD funds flowed through a competitive grant process to schools and districts interested in implementing schoolwide, comprehensive reform. Of these monies, $120 million came from Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title I funds, allocated by formula to states to allow current Title I schools to adopt comprehensive school reform models. An additional $25 million per year also was made available to states for competitive awards to all schools regardless of Title I eligibility. In addition, $4 million was allocated to Regional Educational Laboratories to assist states, districts, and schools in the implementation of the CSRD program (*Education for the Disadvantaged*, 1998).

The data collection strategy used in this study was the phone interview. Principals were interviewed using a protocol (see Appendix A) that was developed collaboratively by AEL Rural Specialty staff and AEL CSRD staff and drew upon other interview protocols from AEL's regional educational laboratory partners. Interviews were conducted during the six-week period beginning in April and ending in mid-May, 2000. To collect data from as broad and diverse a group as possible, AEL staff implemented a sampling strategy that incorporated a variety of rural dimensions and regions from the four states in AEL's region: Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. A strategy was selected that would yield information from two categories of rural schools: (1) schools that were eligible for CSRD funding but did not apply and (2) schools that applied but were not funded through the CSRD program.

Conclusions About Rural Schools That Applied for but Did Not Receive CSRD Program Funds

Based on data gleaned during phone interviews, researchers drew the following conclusions about rural schools that applied for CSRD program funds but did not receive funding:

- In general, the rural schools (especially small, rural schools) in this study have limited resources/capacity to prepare competitive proposals.
- Rural schools need intensive technical assistance in preparing competitive grant applications and proposals.
- More detailed information regarding the CSRD program and grant application process would be helpful to principals in preparing CSRD proposals.
- Respondents said that rural schools seem to face several challenges regarding implementation of comprehensive school reforms. They include limited funds; lack of time and personnel for implementing reform efforts; and lack of community support. Principals state that community members do not understand comprehensive school reform and have low academic expectations for their children.
- In general, principals in this sample were somewhat familiar with the various CSRD models but could use much more information about them.
- Reform efforts of some type were being implemented in most of the sites in the study. In fact, many schools found ways to implement some of the various CSRD models with other types of funding.
- Most reform efforts being implemented were being supported by additional funding outside of the regular school budget. A few schools were implementing efforts with local funds.
- Support for reform efforts is very high at the district level.
- Support for reform efforts is generally positive among school staff.
- Barriers to implementing comprehensive school reform in the sampled schools/districts include: lack of funding; lack of time for implementing reform efforts; and resistance to change among faculty and community.
- Some principals suggested that there were no barriers to implementing comprehensive school reform efforts in their schools/districts.
- Types of technical assistance that would be helpful to these schools regarding CSRD and other reform efforts include utilization/integration of technology; resolution of curricular issues; and proposal development/use of needs assessment data.

Conclusions About Rural Schools That Did Not Apply for CSRD Program Funds

Based on data gleaned during phone interviews, researchers drew the following conclusions about rural schools that did not apply for CSRD program funds:

- In general, most schools did not apply because they were unaware of the program and the availability of funding.
- Of those who were familiar with the CRSD program and available funds, most did not submit proposals because of the lack of resources to do so or because of multiple efforts already taking place in the school.
- Approximately half of those who did not submit a proposal indicated they would consider doing so if they were more aware of the program and application process as well as the CSRD models.
- Those who indicated they would not pursue a CSRD proposal in the future cited a lack of resources (i.e., personnel, time).
- Principals indicated they needed more information about the application process and CSRD models. They also indicated needing more time to prepare proposals and technical assistance with preparing proposals.
- The challenges facing rural schools in implementing comprehensive school reform efforts, according to this sample of principals, included lack of resources (money, time, space, qualified staff); lack of parent and community support; cultural and educational deprivation at home and in the community; geographic and informational isolation; and resistance to change.
- Nearly two thirds of the principals in this sample were not familiar with CSRD models. Of those who were, most indicated that the CSRD models with which they were familiar did not meet their schools' needs.
- State-mandated reform efforts (i.e., Standards of Learning in Virginia, KERA mandates in Kentucky) were described by one third of the principals in this sample as those being implemented in their school. Four of the 30 respondents indicated they had put CSRD models in place with other funds. About one fourth indicated that no reform efforts were being implemented.
- Barriers to implementing comprehensive school reform efforts in their particular school or district included lack of resources; lack of parental and community involvement; and transportation issues.
- The types of technical assistance reported to be most helpful regarding CSRD and other school reform efforts include those involving improved parental involvement; professional development on effective curricular practices; proposal development; and technology skills and integration.
- In general, most principals found their districts to be very supportive of reform efforts.
- Community support for reform efforts was mixed. About one third reported their communities were supportive, while nearly half suggested their communities were supportive, but with some reservations or caution. About one fifth indicated their communities were not supportive of school reform efforts.

Similarities among the Findings between the Two Groups

- Principals from both groups indicated that rural schools needed more information about the CSRD program and application process and technical assistance in preparing proposals.
- Principals from both groups noted similar challenges regarding implementation of comprehensive school reform efforts including: lack of resources; lack of time for implementation; lack of parental and community support, lack of understanding of comprehensive school reform efforts; and general resistance to change among staff and community members.
- Principals from both groups seem to indicate a high level of support for reform at the district level.
- Principals from both groups noted mixed support for comprehensive school reform efforts from their communities.
- Principals from both groups reported similar technical assistance needs which included: utilization of technology; proposal development; effective curricular strategies; and parental involvement.

Differences among the Findings between the Two Groups

- Principals from those schools that applied but were not funded noted limited resources and preparation time as the main reasons they were not funded. Principals from those schools that did not apply most frequently noted they were unaware of the program and the potential funding.
- Principals from those schools that applied but were not funded noted some familiarity with CSRD models, but reported that they could use more information. Principals from those schools that did not apply most frequently noted they were unaware of CSRD models.
- Principals from those schools that applied but were not funded noted that various reform efforts were being implemented at their schools, with most being funded by some other outside source. Principals from those schools that did not apply most frequently noted state-mandated reform efforts being implemented in their school. About one-quarter reported no reform efforts being implemented in their schools.

Study Implications

The findings from this study have implications for those organizations responsible for supporting CSRD implementation. The major implications include the following:

- Some rural schools have been unable to access CSRD funding which is intended to support reform efforts in the lowest performing schools, because of their particular

disadvantages, such as isolation, lack of information and resources, and insufficient staff to maintain multiple reform efforts. By virtue of their need, these schools have lacked the capacity to apply successfully for CSRD monies. Such schools may require more site-specific, long-term, and intensive support than was anticipated. This support might help schools become more adept at applying for funds that will enable their continuing development. Moreover, intensive, ongoing support will enhance the equity of competitions for CSRD funds by increasing the capacity of the most disadvantaged schools to develop grant applications on par with those submitted by less disadvantaged applicants.

- Rural school principals' professional development needs appear to address the following issues: proposal development, nurturing meaningful parent involvement, and integrating technology. It may be particularly important to offer such professional development to rural school principals so they may keep apace with their more affluent, suburban counterparts as administrator responsibilities continue to change.
- It may become important for comprehensive school reform models to have enough flexibility in their design to meet the needs of rural schools. This might include the capacity to enact strategies for working around lack of resources (e.g., time, personnel), developing meaningful community relationships, and integrating CSRD efforts with other reform work already in place.
- New communication strategies for making rural schools fully aware of various efforts intended to support school reform might be necessary. Current strategies being employed may be insufficient to adequately allow rural schools the time necessary to plan and prepare successful acquisition of resources to support reform efforts.

Introduction

Background of Study

Because rural communities in the United States are likely to have economic, political, and cultural characteristics that set them apart from urban areas, it is important to test and refine various Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program models so that they fit the needs of rural areas. As part of AEL's leadership responsibility in the rural specialty area, a study was conducted to inform comprehensive school reform planning and implementation by rural school districts and schools.

The goal of the study was to generate information that would increase the capacity of organizations responsible for supporting CSRD program implementation to serve schools in rural areas and to build the readiness of targeted rural schools to implement comprehensive school reforms. Specifically, the results are intended to assist in the development of providing readiness assistance to rural schools considering CSRD by (1) building the capacity of schools to consider implementing comprehensive reform (through existing programs or strategies that have proven to be effective or through new strategies/models that may fit local needs); (2) adapting existing materials and processes for CSRD models to fit local needs; and (3) developing new, complementary materials and processes as needed.

To achieve this goal, AEL staff conducted a small-scale study regarding the readiness of rural schools to implement comprehensive school reform. Data were collected through phone interviews with rural school principals in AEL's four-state region (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia).

Overview of Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program, new in 1998, provided $150 million for local schools to implement comprehensive school reform programs. Much of these CSRD funds flowed through a competitive grant process (administered by the states) to schools and districts interested in implementing schoolwide, comprehensive reform. Of these monies, $120 million came from Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title I funds, allocated by formula to states to allow current Title I schools to adopt comprehensive school reform models. An additional $25 million per year also was made available to states for competitive awards to all schools regardless of Title I eligibility. In addition, $4 million was allocated to Regional Educational Laboratories to assist states, districts, and schools in the implementation of the CSRD program (*Education of the Disadvantaged*, 1998).

A comprehensive school reform program is one that integrates, in a coherent manner, all nine of the following criteria: (1) effective, research-based strategies, (2) comprehensive design with aligned components, (3) professional development, (4) measurable goals and

benchmarks, (5) support within the school, (6) parental and community involvement, (7) external technical support and assistance, (8) evaluation strategies, and (9) coordination of resources (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

Methodology

This section presents the methodology employed to complete this study.

Data Collection Methods/Instrument

The data collection strategy used in this study was the phone interview. The interview protocol (see Appendix A) was developed collaboratively by AEL Rural Specialty staff and AEL CSRD staff and drew upon other interview protocols from AEL's regional educational laboratory partners. It consisted of 13 questions. Interviews were conducted during the six-week period beginning in April and ending in mid-May, 2000. Interviews were conducted by two veteran staff involved in the rural work of AEL, one consultant or by one research and evaluation specialist with extensive experience in interviewing. The average interview took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Sampling Process

To collect data from as broad and diverse a group as possible, AEL staff implemented a sampling strategy that incorporated a variety of rural dimensions and regions within AEL's four states. A strategy was selected that would yield information from two categories of rural schools: (1) schools that were eligible for CSRD funding but did not apply and (2) schools that applied but were not funded through the CSRD program.

Information regarding the application process was collected from the state departments of education in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Lists were generated to identify which schools fit into the two identified categories (i.e., *eligible but did not apply*, and *applied but were not funded*). From these lists, a random sample of approximately one third of the pool of identified schools was selected for each category in each state. The only exception to this process was in one state where there were only three schools identified as having applied and not been funded. In this instance, all schools were included in the study.

The goal of the study was to complete between 40 and 50 principal interviews, given the resources and time frame available. The number of schools originally sampled was far greater because it was anticipated that principals would be very difficult to contact. Thus, this oversampling technique was used to optimize the potential to achieve the goal of 40-50 completed interviews. So the 40-50 were a convenience sample within the identified sample.

Table 1 presents the final number of schools contacted for each category.

Table 1
Numbers of Schools Contacted

Category	Kentucky	Tennessee	Virginia	West Virginia
Applied/ Not Funded	8	3	4	2
Eligible/Did Not Apply	6	4	9*	11*
Other		1**		1**

*Three schools (one in Virginia, two in West Virginia) in this category had originally been sampled in the "applied/not funded" category

**Schools that were funded through CSRD funds

Of the principals interviewed, 34 were in elementary schools, one was in a K-2 school, and one was in a high school. Seven schools were middle/junior high schools, two were K-4 schools, and two were K-12 schools.

Because of the large number of elementary schools represented, the conclusions of this report clearly represent the views of a larger number of elementary schools.

Findings

This section presents the findings and summaries from the phone interviews of rural school principals. These will be divided into two sets of findings for each of the interview questions. One set will be from the sample of schools that applied, but were not funded for CSRD funds and the second group will be for those schools that were eligible but did not apply.

Summary Findings in Rural Schools That Applied for but Did Not Receive CSRD Program Funds

Principals from 17 rural schools that applied but were not funded participated in the interviews. Summaries are provided below for each of the question sets in the interview.

How familiar were/are you with the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program? How did your school learn about the CSRD program?

All but one of the respondents indicated that they were familiar with the CSRD program to one degree or another. The one principal who was not familiar with it had taken leadership in the school after the proposal had been submitted. Of those who were familiar, six received information from central office personnel, four could not recall where they got their information, and three indicated receiving information from the state department of education. Two reported having received information from a conference and regional service agencies in the state. One respondent indicated he/she received information from a colleague in another school in the district.

Did you apply for a CSRD grant? If YES, how did you go about preparing your proposal?

Clearly all of these respondents had submitted a proposal but were not funded. When asked how they went about preparing a proposal, seven indicated having a small group of teacher staff prepare a proposal, with no specific strategy in mind. One principal said, "We looked at our school population and tried to pick a program." Another noted, "Two or three teachers got together. It was a learning experience for us all." Five reported having specifically tried to address specific needs in the district. One principal in that response category suggested that they had conducted a survey of staff, students, and parents, and all used test scores to articulate their need. Another said, "We looked at our weakness in reading. We put a lot of time and effort into the proposal."

Other strategies that were noted by individual respondents included collaboration with another school, having the model developer assist in writing the proposal, and reviewing the specific CSRD models.

Are you considering applying for a CSRD grant in the future? If YES, what strategies are you undertaking to prepare the proposal? If NO, what factors are keeping you from considering applying in the future?

Thirteen of the 17 respondents indicated that they would consider applying for a CSRD grant in the future. Eight suggested they would try to prepare a more thorough and specific proposal in the future and use more appropriate needs assessment data. One principal noted, "We are using test results, curriculum goals, and benchmarks. We are surveying staff and parents to determine needs." Another indicated, "We are putting together a committee of parents and teachers." Four indicated they would use feedback from the first proposal. Another reported, "Anything that we can do. The reviewer sent back feedback that said we bombarded them with too much information." Another said, "We are also requesting the comments from the last selection team to start writing the new grant." Two suggested they need to provide more detail: "We need to be more direct and specific," and "Yes, we learned a little bit and have written some since. Maybe a little more detail." One other noted, "The feedback we got suggested that the budget was weak. We didn't give enough detail in the budget."

Of those who indicated that they would not submit another proposal (four respondents), one indicated the process was complicated and not clear. One principal noted, "The process for applying was not clear. The guidelines did not state clearly what process to follow." Another suggested they would apply again "...only if forced to. We put a lot of time into the proposal." Still another indicated that they thought their proposal was not scored fairly. One said they were not sure if they were still eligible.

What information would be helpful to you in your efforts to pursue a CSRD grant?

A number of different kinds of responses were offered to this question.

Seven respondents suggested specific assistance in writing the proposal. One principal said, "We need help in taking information about our students and putting it in the proposal." Another said, "Have someone on staff write the proposal." Two respondents wanted more proposal-writing technical assistance: "Do a grant-writing assistance workshop."

Six participants indicated they needed more specific information on how the proposal would be scored and/or clearer expectations for the proposal. On principal said, "For teachers, we need specifics on how it will be scored. We need more information." Another

said, "A direct mailing about the grant explaining the time line of when it would be done. Holding a planning session to help with questions about the grant would be useful."

One unique response came from a principal who suggested a specific training video. "Hands-on resources with directions on how to complete the application. Provide examples from other successful proposals. It would be sending the same message to applicants." Other individual responses suggested a packet of information on research related to best instructional practices, more time to complete the proposal, and providing an example of a winning proposal.

What challenges, if any, make it difficult for rural schools to implement comprehensive school reform?

A number of responses were offered to this question as well. Several of the principals noted more than one challenge.

The most frequently occurring response was a lack of funds. This answer was given a total of eight times. The next most frequent responses were (1) lack of time/personnel and (2) a community that doesn't understand a need for reform or that has low academic expectations. One principal noted, "I have limited staff and resources to implement new programs. Our area is very isolated and we have operated on level funding for the last three years." Another reported, "On the community and parent level there is sometimes not the understanding for need of reform." Still another said, "Some people fail to see the need for reform." Another suggested, "Sometimes the biggest challenge is the expectations. In rural areas, expectations are low."

Interestingly, four respondents indicated there were not real differences in rural areas regarding challenges to implementing reform. One respondent noted, "I don't really see a difference. It is really not difficult to implement what we need to do." Another said, "Not more so than any other school." One principal emphatically said, " I don't believe poverty is an excuse."

Four respondents also mentioned lack of support from parents and the community. One principal said, "We have very little parent involvement." Another said, "We have difficulty getting parents involved due to distance and other factors."

To what extent are you familiar with various CSRD models? Are there any that you are particularly interested in or that you think might fit in well in your school? Rural schools in general?

All of the principals responding indicated that they were familiar (to at least some extent) with the various CSRD models. They were exposed to the models from the technical

assistance that had been provided and from various colleagues in their district or from other schools. Some principals indicated that they spent a lot of time reviewing models, while others spent relatively little time doing so.

Examples of responses to this question set include these: "We got Strategic Reading from a workshop in Lexington;" "We reviewed the CSRD packet that was given out and selected a program from it;" " We looked at Success for All in other schools;" and "That's where we fell short in our grant. The models were investigated. We chose [*model name*], but it was not a strong model. We would have a better idea in the future on other models."

Clearly, the most frequently noted model identified for use in these sites was Success for All, identified by nine respondents. Light Span was identified by four sites. Other models noted by at least one site included Modern Red Schoolhouse, Reading Recovery, Foxfire, Four Block, Core Knowledge, Strategic Reading, Roots and Wings, The Walk, Breakthrough to Literacy, Advanced Learning Systems, and Cognitive Processes of Instruction.

It should be noted, however, that many of the schools implemented their selected model by use of some other funds. That information is provided in response to a subsequent question: *What other reform efforts, if any, are under way in your school? How is it/are they implemented? How is/are the effort(s) supported/funded? Describe the overall reception of the reform effort(s) by students, staff, parents, community members.*

All but two of the principals noted that other reform efforts/programs were taking place in their schools at this time. As mentioned briefly in another part of this report, many of the schools (11) had implemented their selected CSRD model with other funds. In addition, a number of other smaller, more targeted programs were being implemented through a number of resources.

Eight respondents noted other specific kinds of state and federal grants. Two indicated the efforts were being supported through their regular budget. One noted special district funding and one reported funding from another agency.

In general, respondents indicated that staff were very supportive of the reform efforts. One principal said, "Our staff voted 100% for it. They are very supportive." Another noted, "Our staff is very excited. They visited a school who has it in place and the model developer visited us a couple of times." Another said, "The staff are very supportive, they are getting lots of reading training."

However, support from the community and parents, while positive in some cases, was not necessarily as enthusiastic. One noted, "The community has a very positive feeling." Another suggested, "The only parent support comes from those on the local councils or PTOs." Still another indicated, "No support from the broader community."

A few principals mentioned positive student response to the reform efforts. One principal reported, "It's been wonderful. Test scores have gone up 27%." Another indicated, "The children enjoy the program and are showing success."

One of those who indicated that no reform efforts were being implemented gave specific reasons for why that was so. "There is limited parental involvement in the school. The small staff is stretched with the demands of day-to-day activities."

What are the impediments/barriers to implementing comprehensive school reform efforts in your school/district?

Again, the most frequent response related to barriers was the lack of financial support. Seven respondents mentioned lack of funds. Four suggested a lack of time to implement reform efforts or an inability to sustain efforts: "Teachers are open to reform but don't want a program for one or two years," and "Teachers react like other efforts, 'blow in-blow off-blow out'." One respondent indicated resistance to change ("Change of any kind is hard to accept at the school.") one mentioned limited ability of students ("We are doing as well as we can given the ability of our students.") and one mentioned lack of parental involvement.

Interestingly, four respondents suggested there were no barriers.

What kinds of technical assistance would be helpful to you regarding school reform efforts in general, and CSRD efforts in particular?

Four respondents suggested specific technical assistance related to utilization of technology. One noted, "Computer technology. The county is limited in the program and numbers of computers available." Another indicated, "More training in general technology and computer literacy." Still another suggested, "Technology. We have a big initiative to integrate technology."

Four respondents indicated a need for technical assistance related to specific curriculum issues. One simply said, "Comprehensive training for all teachers in reading." Another said, "We are trying to zero in on math, writing, and fine arts."

Three respondents again suggested training related to proposal development. One principal said, "A workshop on grant writing would help provide better insight on how to address the criteria of a RFP." Another suggested, "Working on the proposal as you go."

Receiving one mention apiece were training for parents, training related to research on effective instructional strategies, and use of needs assessment data. One principal suggested visiting other schools to review various successful strategies.

In general, how supportive is your district of reform?

All 17 of the respondents indicated their districts were supportive. For example, "The central office is very pro-reform. Anything that benefits students is all right." Another noted, "The central office and school board are very dedicated to school reform. They encourage principals and staff to seek grants."

In general, how supportive is your community of reform efforts?

Nine of the 17 respondents indicated positive support from parents and the community. One said, "The community leaders and businesses provide a great deal of support through tutors, donations, and help with grant writing." Another said, "We have great community support and good parental involvement." Another noted, "We have full support. They want whatever will help the schools and children."

A few participants described some support, but with reservation. One principal said, "In general, [communities] have been positive, but attitude toward education not as positive." Another reported, "Early on there was real hesitation (in the late '80s). The community wasn't told how the reform efforts would benefit students. Now we are communicating better." Another suggested, "Importance of education is not as high for some parents. They are supportive, but not involved." Still another indicated, "There are parents who are supportive of any program and those who want to push particular issues, programs, and changes based on their personal agendas."

Summary Findings in Rural Schools That Did Not Apply for CSRD Program Funds

Principals from 30 rural schools that did not apply for CSRD funds participated in the interviews. Summaries are provided below for each of the question sets in the interview.

How familiar were/are you with the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program? How did your school learn about the CSRD program?

Of the 30 respondents in this group, five reported they were familiar with the program, eight said they were a little familiar or had heard about it, and 17 indicated they were not familiar with the program at all.

Of those who were familiar, several had attended (or had teachers who attended) training associated with the application process. A few also mentioned getting information

from their central office. Of those who were a little familiar, some got information from their central office, one got information directly from the state department of education, and one from a conference he/she attended.

Did you apply for a CSRD grant? If NO, what were the reasons for making the decision not to apply?

A number of different reasons were given for why these schools did not apply for a CSRD grant, but the most frequent response was that they were not aware of the program or application process. Seventeen of the participants gave this response. Four indicated that they did not have the staffing resources to prepare a proposal. One respondent simply said, "The process of preparing another proposal." Another indicated, "The faculty voted not to apply, it would take too much time." In a related response category, four others suggested that there were too many things going on in the school already. One principal said, "We had so many things going on already."

Two respondents noted the complexity of the application process. One indicated it was a central office decision not to apply and one indicated that the school was being reconfigured into a K-8 school and that there were no good K-8 reform models.

Are you considering applying for a CSRD grant in the future? If YES, what strategies are you undertaking to prepare the proposal? If NO, what factors are keeping you from considering applying in the future?

Of those responding to this item, 10 indicated they would consider applying for a CSRD grant in the future, five said they possibly might, and 10 said they would not.

Ten respondents indicated they would need more information about the program and the application process or assistance in preparing proposals. One principal simply said, "Yes, if we knew more about the program." Another noted, "We are encouraging teachers to look for opportunities. They need to attend grant-writing workshops." Another said, "We need to go to grant-writing school. We will apply if it is available." Four suggested they needed more information about the CSRD models and would need to find one that fit their particular needs. One principal responded, "Yes, we are looking for models that will fit." Another indicated, "I need more information about the models."

Those who said they would not consider applying for a CSRD grant in the future usually indicated it was because of a lack of resources (time) or personnel to prepare the proposal. One principal said, "It would be a lot of work in our situation." Another offered, "We just don't have the resources to prepare proposals." Another said, "Not if it takes more work. Other programs (like Title I) take a lot of time. We don't have enough time."

What information would be helpful to you in your efforts to pursue a CSRD grant?

Fourteen of the respondents indicated they needed more information regarding the application process. For example, "We need the basic guidelines. How much money? How much time is involved to apply and implement? What is the chance of getting a grant?" Another said, "A packet explaining the grant and how it is to be used." Six respondents indicated a need for more information on CSRD models. One principal said, "We need a complete listing and content of models." Another said simply, "More information on models."

Two specifically noted needing more time for preparing proposals. One principal suggested, "We need a lot of forewarning. We need more time to develop a committee and collect our thoughts. We need time to get our minds together with clear objectives. We need a lot of time to prepare and have time to chew it over. We need to have a full understanding of the program to see if it fits well."

Two respondents mentioned ongoing technical assistance in the proposal development. One said, "We need a series of workshops, not just one time. We need someone to follow up and check in with us."

What challenges, if any, make it difficult for rural schools to implement comprehensive school reform?

Many respondents gave multiple answers to this question. The response given most frequently was that of lack of resources (money, time, space, qualified staff). Some illustrative quotes include these: "Lack of resources, money;" "Staff, we don't have enough, and space, additional classrooms are needed;" and "Lack of money, lack of resources, lack of time, lack of staff."

Responses related to a lack of parent and community support for reform were mentioned seven times. Illustrative examples include: "Parental involvement is nil, it is difficult getting them to see the need for reform;" "The district has many needs that should be addressed. There is very little parent involvement;" "Parents lack the understanding of the need for reform;" and "The big thing is trying to get public involvement. They are very leery of schools and find the principal intimidating. They lack confidence in helping schools and about getting involved."

Responses related to cultural and educational deprivation at home and in the community also were mentioned seven times. Illustrative examples of these responses include: "The environmental issues, environment of the students (i.e., home environment). Schools and faculty can't solve home problems that impact learning;" "A lot of kids are just culturally deprived, they have limited reading materials and the like;" and "Because of the low

SES, kids don't have advantages that other kids have in higher SES situations. Those kids get read to, some of our kids come to kindergarten having never used scissors."

Schools' geographical and informational isolation also was mentioned by respondents seven times. Examples of responses in this category include these: "We have fewer people to write grants, we have less access to information," "We are not familiar with what is out there. We only get the bare minimum. We need more information about grants and programs, etc.," and "We are in a large geographical county, some kids ride a bus an hour and fifteen minutes each way."

Difficulty with change was noted by three respondents. One principal said, "Change is hard, people don't like to see change." Another noted, "Change of any nature is difficult because it is a rural area." Two respondents mentioned better research or needs assessment data. One principal suggested, "We need lots of good needs assessment data."

One respondent each mentioned lack of staff development opportunities, lack of job-shadowing opportunities for students, and charter schools as challenges to rural schools in implementing comprehensive school reforms.

One respondent indicated there were no challenges to rural schools: "We can do the same things as other schools."

To what extent are you familiar with various CSRD models? Are there any that you are particularly interested in or that you think might fit in well in your school? Rural schools in general?

Twenty-eight of the 30 respondents provided answers to this question. Of those 28, five indicated they were familiar with the various CSRD models, four indicated they were a little familiar, and 19 indicated they were not familiar with the models.

Two respondents mentioned being familiar with Success for All and one each noted Light Span and Four Block. Four respondents, however, indicated that none of the models fit their need, and one indicated, "I was not impressed with any model at the time."

What other reform efforts, if any, are under way in your school? How is it/are they implemented? How is/are the effort(s) supported/funded? Describe the overall reception of the reform effort(s) by students, staff, parents, community members.

Of those responding to this item, 10 specifically mentioned major state reform initiatives, especially those in Virginia and Kentucky. Example responses from principals include these: "Major reform efforts are those we must do related to SOLs (Standards of

Learning)," "No great reform, but major effort to implement the SOLs," "SOL is the reform," and "KERA is a major state reform funded by state formula."

Four respondents specifically noted putting comprehensive school reform models in place with other kinds of funding. For example, "We have Accelerated Reader, which is supported by a federal grant." One principal specifically mentioned an intensive technology effort. "We have a technological revolution going on. We are putting in lots of technology." One principal noted a School-to-Work initiative, and one mentioned an artist-in-residence program.

Seven respondents reported getting other grant monies to implement the program. Three indicated that the programs were supported by regular district monies. Two mentioned other state initiatives, and two mentioned local business partners. One principal noted, "We get grants from banks and utility companies that have helped fund before-school activities for first graders and after-school programs for third and fifth graders."

Seven respondents indicated there were no reform efforts being implemented in their school at this time.

In general, respondents indicated that the reform efforts were viewed positively by staff and parents.

What are the impediments barriers to implementing comprehensive school reform efforts in your school district?

Responses to this question echoed those presented earlier to the question regarding challenges in rural areas. Responses related to lack of resources (money, time, space, staff) were offered 11 times. Examples include: "Space is limited for programs, and funding is very limited;" and "Money to provide materials and instruction. Facilities are not that great. We need more technology. We have a fourteenth century building, but need twenty-first century technology to best serve kids."

Lack of parent and community involvement was noted eight times. One principal said, "The community is hard to get involved." Another noted, "Getting parents' commitment to education." Lack of information with regard to reform issues was noted in six responses. One principal said, "We have a lack of knowledge about reform models." Five responses were related to the need for training of parents. One principal noted, "We need to have parent training. Technology, GED, etc."

Four responses were related to transportation issues. One principal reported, "Transportation is a problem unless we pay for extra drivers. All our parents work." Another noted, "Having such a wide drawing area of students. Some students ride the bus one hour each way. There is a big difference in kids because of SES circumstances and distances from schools." Three responses each were noted for educational deprivation in the home and for

upcoming school configuration/school consolidation issues. One principal reported, "Next year we will be consolidating three schools into one. New school will be over 1,000 students."

One response was noted regarding the overwhelming nature of having too many grants in a rural area. The principal reported, "Schools are in the middle of leveraging every group's chance for a grant. You need to be a PR person with all those that get a grant to involve schools." One respondent noted the difficulty in motivating veteran staff. The principal said, "With older/veteran staff (we) have a hard time getting them fired up. Younger faculty are easier to motivate."

What kinds of technical assistance would be helpful to you regarding school reform efforts in general, and CSRD efforts in particular?

A number of different responses were offered to this question, with principals often noting several. Responses related to educating parents on reform and improving parent involvement were mentioned most frequently, with six responses. One principal said, "We need to figure out how to get the community and parents involved. We offered training once for parents. Twenty-five signed up, only three showed up." Another noted, "We really need parent involvement." Still another noted, "We need workshops on working with parents on educating them on reform." One principal suggested, "The school is the center/hub of the community. We need parenting programs that are known to be successful."

Five responses were related to professional development in general or to effective curricular practices. One principal simply said, "Knowledge about anything!" One said, "Staff development in general, particularly as specific needs arise." Another noted, "Professional development related to curriculum alignment, curricular mapping, and unit design."

Five responses were related to technical assistance regarding proposal development. One principal suggested, "Grant-writing workshop where we review grants and look for loopholes in what issues have not been addressed." Another noted, "There is always complexity in grant writing. We need help in preparing proposals."

Four responses were related to technology skills. One principal said, "We need professional development that is worthwhile in technology things." Another said, "We need more on technology and computer literacy. My kids are helping my teachers."

Three respondents indicated their needs were being met. One indicated the school did not have time for professional development.

One principal suggested training on mental health issues (i.e., ADHD and distributing medications). Another suggested visiting other schools to view CSRD models in action. One principal suggested professional development for teachers on aspects of poverty.

In general, how supportive is your district of reform?

Twenty-five of the 30 respondents indicated their districts were supportive of reform efforts. Many positive comments were offered by those respondents who felt the district was supportive. Several simply said, "Very supportive."

Five of the 30 suggested their districts were supportive but noted some caution or reservation. One principal said, "To a degree," while another said, "If you can prove to them that it will work, then they are supportive."

No respondent suggested that his or her district was not supportive of reform efforts.

In general, how supportive is your community of reform efforts?

Of those responding, 11 indicated that their communities were supportive or very supportive, 13 suggested they were somewhat supportive but also provided some caution, and six suggested that their communities were not supportive.

Of those reporting supportive communities, example responses include these: "Very supportive;" "The business community is very supportive;" and "Very positive. Our school community is very supportive and we have a very user-friendly atmosphere."

Those reporting support, but with some reservations or cautions, gave more in-depth responses. One principal said, "It can go either way. Depends on the person who approaches them." Another one said, "They are supportive, but with limited knowledge." Another reported, "They are supportive but are leery of involvement." One principal noted, "Educating them on how schools have changed and the need for reform is a challenge. They still think schools are like when they went to school. We need more parent involvement." Still others said things like, "Medium. There is a lot of poverty with a lot of uneducated people. They don't get excited;" "A lot are at the orientation stage. They need more understanding and information;" "A little less than the school division. They don't see why there is a need for some of the changes—if it's not broke, don't fix it;" and "The challenge is a lack of community involvement. But I do find them supportive, it is more a lack of interest."

Those who did not find the community supportive of reform efforts gave the following responses. One said, "Change is difficult in rural areas. Education is not a top priority. Many see education as a luxury." Another said, "Below average. There is resistance to change. We cannot please parents." Still another indicated, "The community is not in contact enough to provide input. The community is not very involved."

Conclusions

Conclusions About Rural Schools That Applied for but Did Not Receive CSRD Program Funds

Based on data gleaned during phone interviews, researchers drew the following conclusions about rural schools that applied for CSRD program funds but did not receive funding:

- In general, the rural schools (especially small, rural schools) in this study have limited resources/capacity to prepare competitive proposals.
- Rural schools need intensive technical assistance in preparing competitive grant applications and proposals.
- More detailed information regarding the CSRD program and grant application process would be helpful to principals in preparing CSRD proposals.
- Respondents said that rural schools seem to face several challenges regarding implementation of comprehensive school reforms. They include limited funds; lack of time and personnel for implementing reform efforts; and lack of community support. Principals state that community members do not understand comprehensive school reform and have low academic expectations for their children.
- In general, principals in this sample were somewhat familiar with the various CSRD models but could use much more information about them.
- Reform efforts of some type were being implemented in most of the sites in the study. In fact, many schools found ways to implement some of the various CSRD models with other types of funding.
- Most reform efforts being implemented were being supported by additional funding outside of the regular school budget. A few schools were implementing efforts with local funds.
- Support for reform efforts is very high at the district level.
- Support for reform efforts is generally positive among school staff.
- Barriers to implementing comprehensive school reform in the sampled schools/districts include: lack of funding; lack of time for implementing reform efforts; and resistance to change among faculty and community.
- Some principals suggested that there were no barriers to implementing comprehensive school reform efforts in their schools/districts.
- Types of technical assistance that would be helpful to these schools regarding CSRD and other reform efforts include utilization/integration of technology; resolution of curricular issues; and proposal development/use of needs assessment data.

Conclusions About Rural Schools That Did Not Apply for CSRD Program Funds

Based on data gleaned during phone interviews, researchers drew the following conclusions about rural schools that did not apply for CSRD program funds:

- In general, most schools did not apply because they were unaware of the program and the availability of funding.
- Of those who were familiar with the CRSD program and available funds, most did not submit proposals because of the lack of resources or because of multiple efforts already taking place in the school.
- Approximately half of those who did not submit a proposal indicated they would consider doing so if they were more aware of the program and application process as well as the CSRD models.
- Those who indicated they would not pursue a CSRD proposal in the future cited a lack of resources (i.e., personnel, time).
- Principals indicated they needed more information about the application process and CSRD models. They also indicated needing more time to prepare proposals and more technical assistance with preparing proposals.
- The challenges facing rural schools in implementing comprehensive school reform efforts, according to this sample of principals, included lack of resources (money, time, space, qualified staff); lack of parent and community support; cultural and educational deprivation at home and in the community; geographic and informational isolation; and resistance to change.
- Nearly two thirds of the principals in this sample were not familiar with CSRD models. Of those who were, most indicated that the CSRD models with which they were familiar did not meet their schools' needs.
- State-mandated reform efforts (i.e., Standards of Learning in Virginia, KERA mandates in Kentucky) were described by one third of the principals in this sample as those being implemented in their school. Four of the 30 respondents indicated they had put CSRD models in place with other funds. About one fourth indicated that no reform efforts were being implemented.
- Barriers to implementing comprehensive school reform efforts in their particular school or district included lack of resources; lack of parental and community involvement; and transportation issues.
- The types of technical assistance reported to be most helpful regarding CSRD and other school reform efforts include those involving improved parental involvement; professional development on effective curricular practices; proposal development; and technology skills and integration.
- In general, most principals found their districts to be very supportive of reform efforts.
- Community support for reform efforts was mixed. About one third reported their communities were supportive, while nearly half suggested their communities were supportive, but with some reservations or caution. About one fifth indicated their communities were not supportive of school reform efforts.

Similarities among the Findings between the Two Groups

- Principals from both groups indicated that rural schools needed more information about the CSRD program and application process and technical assistance in preparing proposals.
- Principals from both groups noted similar challenges regarding implementation of comprehensive school reform efforts including: lack of resources; lack of time for implementation; lack of parental and community support; lack of understanding of comprehensive school reform efforts; and general resistance to change among staff and community members.
- Principals from both groups seem to indicate a high level of support for reform at the district level.
- Principals from both groups noted mixed support for comprehensive school reform efforts from their communities.
- Principals from both groups reported similar technical assistance needs which included: utilization of technology; proposal development; effective curricular strategies; and parental involvement.

Differences among the Findings between the Two Groups

- Principals from those schools that applied but were not funded noted limited resources and preparation time as the main reasons they were not funded. Principals from those schools that did not apply most frequently noted they were unaware of the program and the potential funding.
- Principals from those schools that applied but were not funded noted some familiarity with CSRD models, but reported that they could use more information. Principals from those schools that did not apply most frequently noted they were unaware of CSRD models.
- Principals from those schools that applied but were not funded noted that various reform efforts were being implemented at their schools, with most being funded by some other outside source. Principals from those schools that did not apply most frequently noted state-mandated reform efforts being implemented at their school. About one-quarter reported no reform efforts being implemented in their schools.

Study Implications

The findings from this study have implications for those organizations responsible for supporting CSRD implementation. The major implications are articulated in this section.

- Some rural schools have been unable to access CSRD funding which is intended to support reform efforts in the lowest performing schools, because of their particular disadvantages, such as isolation, lack of information and resources, and insufficient staff to maintain multiple reform efforts. By virtue of their need, these schools have lacked the capacity to apply successfully for CSRD monies. Such schools may require more site-specific, long-term, and intensive support than was anticipated. This support might help schools become more adept at applying for funds that will enable their continuing development. Moreover, intensive, ongoing support will enhance the equity of competitions for CSRD funds by increasing the capacity of the most disadvantaged schools to develop grant applications on par with those submitted by less disadvantaged applicants.
- Rural school principals' professional development needs appear to address the following issues: proposal development, nurturing meaningful parent involvement, and integrating technology. It may be particularly important to offer such professional development to rural school principals so they may keep apace with their more affluent, suburban counterparts as administrator responsibilities continue to change.
- It may become important for comprehensive school reform models to have enough flexibility in their design to meet the needs of rural schools. This might include the capacity to enact strategies for working around lack of resources (e.g., time, personnel), developing meaningful community relationships, and integrating CSRD efforts with other reform work already in place.
- New communication strategies for making rural schools fully aware of various efforts intended to support school reform might be necessary. Current strategies being employed may be insufficient to adequately allow rural schools the time necessary to plan and prepare successful acquisition of resources to support reform efforts.

References

Education for the disadvantaged: Joint explanatory statement of the committee of conference, H. R. 390, 105th Cong., 1st Sess. (1998). http://ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/committee.html (25 May 2000).

U.S. Department of Education. (1998). Guidance on the Comprehensive Reform Demonstration Program. Washington, DC: Author.

Appendix A

Introduction for CSRD Principal Interview

School: Principal:

State: Date: Free/reduced lunch %:

Hello! My name is _____ calling from AEL in Charleston, West Virginia. I am calling to talk with _____ about his/her experience with the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program grant application. Is she/he available? (IF NO, When might be a convenient time to reach him/her?). IF YES, I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences with the application process. Would now be a convenient time for you to talk with me or would another time be better? (SCHEDULE ANOTHER TIME IF NEEDED).

Let me tell you a little more about why I am calling. AEL is conducting a small-scale study about the readiness of rural schools to implement comprehensive school reforms. AEL is one of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Office of Education. The region we serve includes Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. We are the Lab that specializes in rural education. We would like to ask you a series of questions that will help us assess the unique needs and conditions of rural schools with regard to comprehensive school reform. AEL is interested in learning from rural school principals the issues associated with consideration of applying for CSRD grant funds. One way we are doing this is by talking directly to rural school principals who may have been eligible to apply for the funds.

Your answers will be anonymous and confidential; that is, no one will get to see your responses except our interview staff. The report that we produce from the interviews we are conducting will only use summary data. No quotes will be attributed to any individual by name or location. For your participation, we would like to share a copy of the report with you to learn of other successful strategies that have been identified in our study. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. How familiar were/are you with the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program? How did your school learn about the CSRD program?

2. Did you apply for a CSRD grant?

   If YES, how did you go about preparing your proposal?

   If NO, what were the reasons for making the decision not to apply?

3. Are you considering applying for a CSRD grant in the future?

   If YES, what strategies are you undertaking to prepare the proposal? (PROBE for: needs assessment, student data, other).

   If NO, what factors are keeping you from considering applying in the future?

4. What information would be helpful to you in your efforts to pursue a CSRD grant?

5. What challenges, if any, make it difficult for *rural* schools to implement comprehensive school reform?

6. To what extent are you familiar with various CSRD models? Are there any that you are particularly interested in or that you think might fit well in your school? Rural schools in general?

7. What other reform efforts, if any, are under way in your school? How is it/are they implemented? How is/are the effort(s) supported/funded? Describe the overall reception of the reform effort(s) by students, staff, parents, and community members.

8. What are the impediments/barriers to implementing comprehensive school reform efforts in *your* school/district?

9. What kinds of technical assistance would be helpful to you regarding school reform efforts in general, and CSRD efforts in particular?

10. In general, how supportive is your district of reform?

11. In general, how supportive is your community of reform efforts?

12. Are there other questions we should be asking to help us understand how to help rural schools implement comprehensive school reform efforts?

Note: If training in applying for CSRD funds is offered by AEL in the near future, would you like to be contacted regarding the training?

YES NO

Name:

School:

Address:

Telephone:

Appendix B

AEL SEDCAR Standards Checklist

The *Standards for Educational Data Collection and Reporting* (1991) were used in the development of this (check one):

- ☐ Study group report
- ☐ Field test report
- ☐ Minigrant final report
- ☐ Implementation report
- ☒ Research report
- ☐ Impact study report
- ☐ Other _____

The SEDCAR Standards were consulted and used as indicated in the table below (check or mark as appropriate):

SEDCAR Standard Number and Descriptor	The Standard was deemed applicable; and, to the extent feasible, was taken into account.*	The Standard was deemed applicable; but could not be taken into account.	The Standard was not deemed applicable.	Exception was taken to the Standard.
1.1 Creating an Infrastructure to Manage Data Collection Activities	X			
1.2 Justifying Data Collection Activities	X			
1.3 Fostering Commitment of all Participants	X			
1.4 Creating an Appropriate Management Process	X			
2.1 Formulating and Refining Study Questions	X			
2.2 Choosing the Data Collection Methods	X			
2.3 Developing a Sampling Plan	X			
2.4 Assessing the Value of Obtainable Data	X			
2.5 Transforming Study Question Concepts into Measures	X			
2.6 Designing the Data Collection Instrument	X			
2.7 Minimizing Total Study Error (Sampling and Nonsampling)	X			
2.8 Reviewing and Pretesting Data Collection Instruments, Forms, and Procedures	X			
2.9 Preparing a Written Design	X			
3.1 Preparing for Data Collection	X			
3.2 Selecting and Training Data Collection Staff	X			
3.3 Ethical Treatment of Data Providers	X			
3.4 Minimizing Burden and Nonresponse	X			
3.5 Implementing Data Collection Quality Control Procedures	X			

*Four column headings from Evaluation *Standards*.

SEDCAR Standard Number and Descriptor	The Standard was deemed applicable; and, to the extent feasible, was taken into account.*	The Standard was deemed applicable; but could not be taken into account.	The Standard was not deemed applicable.	Exception was taken to the Standard.
3.6 Documenting Data Collections	X			
4.1 Planning Systems Requirements	X			
4.2 Designing Data Processing Systems	X			
4.3 Developing Data Processing Systems	X			
4.4 Testing Data Processing Systems	X			
4.5 Planning for Data Preparation	X			
4.6 Preparing Data for Processing and Analysis	X			
4.7 Maintaining Programs and Data Files	X			
4.8 Documenting Data Processing Activities	X			
4.9 Evaluating Data Processing Systems	X			
5.1 Preparing an Analysis Plan	X			
5.2 Developing Analysis Variables	X			
5.3 Applying Appropriate Weights			X	
5.4 Estimating Sampling and Nonsampling Errors			X	
5.5 Determining Statistical Significance			X	
6.1 Presenting Findings	X			
6.2 Reviewing the Report	X			
6.3 Releasing Data	X			
6.4 Disseminating Data	X			
6.5 Preparing Documentation and Technical Reports	X			

Name: Gregory D. Leopold (typed) Date: 7/11/00

Gregory D. Leopold (signature)

Position or Title: Research and Evaluation Specialist

Agency: AEL, Inc.

Address: P. O. Box 1348

Charleston, WV 25325-1348

Relation to Document: Report author
(e.g., author of document, co-author, project director, project supervisor)